

The Sailors' Snug Harbor, Dining Hall (Infirmary)
Richmond Terrace
New Brighton
New York
Richmond County
New York

HABS No. NY-5479

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5479

THE SAILORS' SNUG HARBOR, DINING HALL (INFIRMARY)

Address: Richmond Terrace, between Tysen Avenue and Delafield Place, New Brighton, New York, Richmond County, New York.

Present Owner: The Trustees of The Sailors' Snug Harbor in the City of New York.

Present Occupant: The Sailors' Snug Harbor.

Present Use: Infirmary and dormitory with cafeteria in basement.

Statement of Significance: The Sailors' Snug Harbor is a home for aged seamen opened on Staten Island in 1833. Built in 1854-55, this building, originally called the dining hall, is part of the institution's particularly rich catalog of nineteenth-century architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: See photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473, for this information.
2. Date of erection: This building was not shown on James Butler's Map of Staten Island, or Richmond County, New York, published in 1853. In an article in Appleton's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Art, of December 4, 1869, the author states that this building was built in 1854. On November 22, 1855, the New York Daily Times published an account in which the dining hall was described as a "new building."
3. Architect: An article in the New York Daily Times of November 22, 1855, suggests that Mr. Salmon was the architect. In Trow's New York City Directory published in 1855 was the following listing:

Salmon James, builder, 121-1/2 E. 16th, h. 125 E. 16th.
4. Original plans and construction: On November 22, 1855, the New York Daily Times published the following account of the building:

Mr. Salmon, architect and builder at the Harbor, has furnished at our request, a description, which is interesting:

The main building [the dining hall] is eighty feet square, three stories in height, with counter-cellar and basement.

The first or principal story is used for dining-rooms, which are capable of sitting 600 persons with ease.

The dining rooms are separated by a wide hall running through the centre of the building. The hall is fifteen feet in width, with an easy flight of stairs to ascend to the third story.

The second and third stories are allotted for sleeping apartments, bath-room, water-closets and wardrobes.

In the loft there are four large water tanks capable of holding each 6,000 gallons of water, which is received from the roof, and otherwise supplied from reservoirs on the premises by force pumps.

The basement is occupied by the steward's room, kitchen, store rooms and offices; all of which are admirably arranged for the comfort of the inmates.

The buildings are well ventilated and thoroughly heated by hot air, and well calculated to produce all the comforts in regard to health &c., requisite for the inmates of the above institution.

A passage-way connects the main building to the old one which shelters the inmates in their occupations in stormy weather.

5. Alterations and additions: The following description from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, January, 1873, indicates how the building was used at that time:

The inmates were at their dinner in the large and attractive dining-hall when we entered it. This is situated on the ground-floor of a large building in the rear of the main or central building, with which it communicates by a wooden bridge, raised about ten feet above the ground. The largest dining-room contains twelve long tables, each of which can accommodate thirty-two diners. In another dining-room opposite there are four tables, each capable of accommodating the same number.

Crossing the bridge, we again enter the rear building, the basement of which is occupied by the kitchen, the

store-room, steward's office, colored men's mess, and blindmen's mess. Here, also, are the apartments in which the assistants and employe's of the institution take their meals. . . .

The building is now used as an infirmary and dormitory with a cafeteria located in the basement.

B. Bibliography

Note: See photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473, for additional bibliographical material.

Map of Staten Island, or Richmond County, New York. Surveyed, Drawn and Published by James Butler, 1853.

"New York--Charity Institutions," Appleton's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art, December 4, 1869, pp. 485-86.

"Sailors' Snug Harbor. Corner Stone of a New Chapel," New York Daily Times, November 22, 1855, p. 2.

Wilson, H., compiler. Trow's New York City Directory. New York: John F. Trow, 1855.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural interest and merit: The Sailors' Snug Harbor is a home for aged seamen opened on Staten Island in 1833. Built in 1854-55, this building, originally called the dining hall, is part of the institution's particularly rich catalog of nineteenth-century architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Number of stories: Three stories plus basement.
2. Over-all dimensions: The north and south facades each measure approximately 77'-0"; the east and west sides each measure approximately 82'-0".
3. Number of bays: Each elevation of the building is seven bays wide.
4. Layout, shape: The building is I-shaped in plan.
5. Foundations: Brick walls.

6. Wall construction, finish and color: Red brick laid up in running bond and painted yellow.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Combination glass and wooden doors.
 - b. Windows: Round-headed and segmental-arched windows have six-over-six-light double-hung wooden sash with stone lintels and sills and brick architraves. Basement windows are square-headed with eight-over-eight-light double-hung sash; third floor windows have three-over-three-light double-hung sash.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gabled roof with modern shingles.
 - c. Cornice: Wooden cornice painted white.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans, by floor: Two intersecting hallways running north and south and east and west, off of which wards and dormitory rooms open.
2. Stairway: Wooden stairway at intersection of hallways; it is a single run stairway that divides at landing with double reverse runs to second floor.
3. Wall finish: Plaster walls with wooden wainscoting, plaster ceiling.
4. Doorways and doors: Wooden doors; arched openings at end of east-west hallway open into adjacent buildings.
5. Heating: Central.

D. Site and Surroundings

1. Orientation: The buildings is now connected on all facades to adjacent buildings by covered passageways and no longer has a main entranceway. It is located directly to the rear (south) of Building C, the central dormitory.
2. Sidewalks: Stone.

Note: For additional photographs of the building see photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473.

Prepared by Diana S. White
Architectural Historian
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